Helping out *WD*

I presently send substantially more copies of Willful Disobedience *out to friends and reviewers for free than to paid subscribers. This is all paid for out of my pockets.* ***So I can always use donations of cash and stamps for the project****—particularly stamps. I would also appreciate it if interested folk would keep an eye out in their local papers for stories about particularly creative acts of revolt, vandalism, sabotage, bank robberies and so on. These need not be consciously political acts as long as they show some imagination, some creativity. At present, the information I get about acts of revolt all involves politically conscious activity, but much more significant from a revolutionary perspective are the daily acts of revolt carried out be individuals in response to the misery of their daily lives, so any stories of this sort would be highly appreciated. I am also interested in tidbits that expose the absurdity of religion, the family, police agencies and so on. Mail or e-mail them to the addresses below.*

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Willful Disobedience

An Anarchist Bimonthly
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... the time has come to say things without mincing words.

CHANGES IN *WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE*

As you can see, I have changed the formatting of *Willful Disobedience*. This is in part due to problems with my computer that are making it increasingly difficult to do more complex formatting tricks, but it also reflects a few changes in what I am doing with *WD*. I have always included a fair amount of theoretical and analytical content since this is something sorely lacking in the English language anarchist press (particularly that of the US), but I have also included a substantial amount of news shorts. Since most of these items appear in other anarchist periodicals that have far wider circulation, I have decided to limit these items. I will include articles analyzing actions – for example, analyses of anti-war activity – and revolts, and I will include news shorts in a "news of revolt" section of the sort that are likely not to appear in that many places, particularly news of actions that do not fit within the usual "political" frameworks, but rather reflect people's attempts to attack the alienation and oppression they experience in their daily lives. Please send more stories of this sort to me.

of beer and love.
One day we would find our dream
and it would not be an Eden
but a voyage to unknown places.

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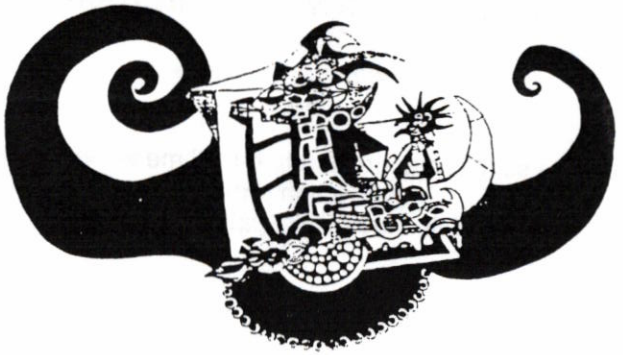
*It is a delightful paradox that utopian **dreamers** are so often accused by utopian **schemers** of only being negative – always criticizing but never making positive proposals. Such accusations have been flung at anarchists, surrealists, libertarian communists and so many others. Yet when these vibrant dreamers choose to become schemers, their schemes always seem to fall short of the critique offered by their dreams. This is no accident. When one rejects all hierarchy, all domination, all representation, then one cannot present a completed vision of the world that one desires. Rather it would be a world that transforms in every moment with the desires, needs and aspirations of those who live in it freely interacting, coming together in love or common interest, separating when conflict of desires moves them in different directions. It would be no paradise, but a constant, adventurous journey without end full of loves and hatreds, joys and sorrows, real conflicts as well as joyful intercourse of all sorts. And those who strive to impose their schemes of a perfect world, a paradise, who strive to force this journey to a predetermined end, are as much my enemies as the current institutions of domination that impose so many barriers to this journey. So, indeed, like all utopian dreamers, I am a great negator – I seek to destroy every barrier to the marvelous journey of a free existence.*



Dark shining eyes
like an octopus dreaming
caress the cavity of my mind,
plunging into caverns
where the flowers of desire
glow in iridescent midnight blue
like the thorax of a tree frog
whose marvelous tongue
engorges the flattening flies of
the midnight sun.
Once again the dances find
a universe within the spreading thorax
of a hummingbird
who sings of dreams
that scamper past the limited
utopias of those who accept
the measurement of rulers.
I have clothed myself
in vaginal splendor
in those times when insurrection
spread its aphrodisiac face
across the horizon
and the wombats found their pleasure
in a cup of minstrel wine
left by the eyeless girl
whose lovely dreams went far
beyond the world of drawers.
For hours we danced within
midnight flowers licking the petals
of our skin which was the paper
of a manifesto of lust
that spread its seed throughout
the continent of daydreams
and found the land of silver-backed
gorillas laughing at the amber fluid
of a lovely dreamer of symptomatic
beams,
and the days flourished through the vibrancy

A FEW WORDS:
On Being Who We Say We Are

I call myself an anarchist not because the word sounds good, nor because it will make me appear more radical, nor even merely because I desire the disappearance of the state (even Lenin claimed that he ultimately desired this much... when the time was ripe). I call myself an anarchist because I have chosen to go about my struggle against the world of domination in a particular way. In these times when the degradation of language drains words of their content, undermining the capacity for meaningful dialogue, it is particularly important for anarchists to maintain the significance of this term.

It has been rightly said that "anarchism is not a concept that can be locked up in a word like a gravestone". But this is not because it can mean anything, but rather because, as the same writer said, "it is a way of conceiving life, and life... is not something definitive: it is a stake we must play day after day." The anarchist is one who chooses to play this stake on her own terms to the extent that this is possible. In particular, the anarchist is one who chooses to carry on his *struggle* on her own terms, without any room for compromise or negotiation with the ruling institutions. This refusal does not stem from a desire for purity, as some have tried to claim, but from the recognition that any compromise on the field of struggle would be a further relinquishment of the lives that have already been stolen from us, the lives we are struggling to take back.

Perhaps the most basic anarchist principle, the one from which all the others spring, is the recognition that freedom can only be realized *in freedom*, that self-determination – that is to say, the creation of lives that are truly *our own* – can only be won through a struggle that is truly *our own*. This is what is meant when we say that our ends must exist in the means we use to achieve them.

This principle is not merely a fine, ethical stance. Above all, it is a hard lesson that has been brought home over and over again in every revolutionary experience. Compromise with the ruling institutions, with the so-called oppositional institutions that claim to represent the people in struggle or with any form of hierarchy or representation is always the death of the struggle against all domination. Such compromises are the points where either the old power begins to establish itself (as in France in 1968) or the new power begins to take hold (as in Russia after the October 1917 revolution). So this principle, in fact, has a solid foundation.

But this principle is also the primary distinction between an *anarchist* revolutionary perspective and any other revolutionary perspective. All forms of communism call for the eventual withering away of the state. But an anarchist perspective recognizes that the state and every other institution must be rejected from the start, because institutions usurp the capacity of people for self-organization. And it is here that the anarchist wager – the staking of one's life spoken of above – comes into play. Having not merely called for the

eventual end of the state, the institutions of domination and all hierarchy and representation, but having also rejected them here and now as means for carrying out one's revolutionary struggle, one has no choice but to actually pursue a methodology that relies only on oneself and one's trusted comrades, a methodology based in autonomy and self-organization, direct action in its true sense – i.e., acting directly to achieve one's aims for oneself – and total conflict with the ruling order.

Quite clearly there is no place in such a choice for voting, for petitioning the state, for litigation, for promoting legislation of any sort or for fooling oneself that any means by which one legally gains one's survival in any way reflects an anarchist or revolutionary perspective. But to fully comprehend what it means to carry out one's struggle in a self-organized manner, it is necessary to recognize the full extent of the institutions of domination. If one refuses to vote because one rejects the idea of being represented, then logically one would also refuse to talk to New York Times journalists or television reporters for precisely the same reason. The image they paint of the anarchist is also a representation, and the argument that we should talk to them in order to put out a more accurate representation follows the same logic as that which calls us to vote in order to get better representation in the halls of government. The anarchists in Greece who smash television cameras and attack journalists have a much better idea of how to deal with the misrepresentations of the media.

The economic blackmail of capitalist society will force us to make some compromises in terms of how we get the things we need to live (even robbing a bank is a compromise, since, in fact, we'd rather live without money and banks or the system that creates them). There is not currently a strong enough movement of social subversion to counteract this, one in which the taking and sharing of goods is a widespread, festive practice. But in terms of our various social and personal struggles against this society, no such coercion exists, and one can choose to struggle as an anarchist – refusing to turn to any of the institutions of domination to accomplish the tasks we consider necessary to accomplish the social transformation we desire. Such a refusal means rejecting all the various ideologies and practices of the capitalist cult of efficiency for its own sake – the quantitative illusions that judges a movement in terms of numbers of participants, the pragmatic acceptance of "whatever works", the fetish of organization which creates invisible hierarchies with its theoretical and practical programs to which people are to adhere. Thus, from an anarchist perspective, the phrase "by any means necessary" becomes counter-revolutionary. It is the opening of the door to the Reign of Terror or the slaughter at Kronstadt.

So if it is to mean anything when we call ourselves anarchists, we need to keep this primary principle in mind: our struggle against this world must be completely our own. Of course, this is no simple task. It requires the use of

that is insurrection, the utopian dream. If Columbus helped to forge a path that meant misery for nearly all of humanity, then we must diverge absolutely from all known paths, to enter into the marvelous of wild, uncharted desires.

-3-

"I am in love with a dream, and the moisture between my thighs is utopia." So spoke the dark eyes of a woman whose beauty was a mist that drew me into its marvelous obscurity. Her earlobes sang of insurrections exploding through her nipples caressed by silken fingers and the wings of butterflies.

The poetry of true utopia rests within the heart of desire. It is at war with the schemes that would define every moment of life. The bureaucrat's vision of paradise where everything is perfect and nothing is human, where love is forgotten and dreams are ignored, this is the enemy of poetry.

-4-

Where are the fiery-eyed utopians, those whose passions have no patience, those whose hearts burn so hot that their eyes flash flames of madness, the madness of utopia and love that has not divorced itself from lust? It has been far too long since I danced naked on a wild, barren hilltop that rises from a singing forest with other wild dreamers, leaping to kiss the moon.

Here is the difference between utopias: Those of dreams glimmer in the moments that spark revolt, that move us toward insurrection. Those of schemes are never seen in the present except in the form of holocausts and genocides, the holy wars of true believers, because schemes must rid themselves of the unpredictable. Dreams, on the contrary, depend on the unpredictable, thus on the ***passion*** *of love, the erotic spark of lust. It is not by chance that revolt is a lover seen backwards through a cup of (mushroom?) tea.*

questioning, experimentation, exploration. So as everything closes down around us, we cannot follow suit, letting our dreams drown in the misery of realism, pragmatism and utility. Now, more than ever, we need to grasp all the marvelous force of impossible dreams expressed in the fiercest of insurgent principles, in the refusal of compromise, with the fullness of our passion and our reason. Not out of a desire for purity (which is always an illusion), but from the realization that dreams of freedom can only be realized in freedom, that dreams of a life lived fully ***as our own*** *can only be realized by living our struggle here and now* ***as our own*** *without any willing compromise with the institutions of domination. Disaster surrounds us, but our lives must not be defined by it. In its midst we must continue to dream and to grasp our dreams, transforming them into our reasons for revolt.*

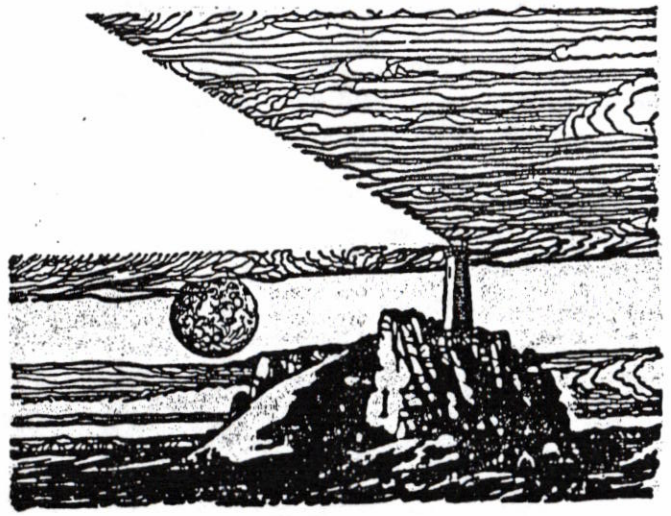
-2-

It is clear that we are living in a world moving further and further into horror and misery. Sometimes in the name of great ideals, more often nowadays quite blatantly in the name of naked power, the rulers of this world pursue policies that homogenize and impoverish existence, spreading disaster everywhere. But this is not really so new. Didn't Columbus begin to spread this process (already well under way in Europe) when he brought a religion that gloried in death and an economy with an insatiable appetite, eating everything in its path to produce shit, to a world already thriving with human life, as well as that of plants and animals unknown in Europe? Thus, a process euphemistically called colonialism, more accurately described as genocide, began to spread throughout the world, slaughtering and enslaving people everywhere, kidnapping black Africans to enslave them in the Americas, all after having dispossessed the peasants of Europe, forcing them into destitution and survival by any means necessary. This process of dispossession has advanced to the point that now our language diminishes and it often seems that even our thoughts are not our own.

The masters of this world tell us that we cannot go back. And they are right as far as they go. We cannot go back. The world has changed too much and we have changed too much. But though we can't go back, this does not mean we must go forward. If the path we are on can only lead to a drab and lifeless horror and if the passage back is blocked, then we must go ***elsewhere****, the elsewhere of the unknown*

practical imagination in order to figure out how to carry out the various tasks that we place before ourselves. It requires a willingness to make a constant critical assessment of what we are doing, refusing to make excuses. It requires a willingness to recognize our current limits while, of course, perpetually seeking to expand *our* possibilities.

To a great extent, the term "anarchist" has been drained of meaning due to its increasing popularity as a self-description since the fall of the traditional left and particularly since the demonstrations in Seattle at the end of 1999. But this loss of meaning has also been advanced by anarchists who have been in the movement for years, who choose to embrace an evangelistic project, placing numbers and visibility in the spectacle above the concrete attempt to live out their revolt and to create their struggle as their own. This leads to an embrace of that capitalistic sort of pragmatism in which the ultimate aims have been lost in the striving for immediate effect – the methodology of the advertiser. To counter this, it is necessary to clarify once again what the anarchist project actually is. It is not an attempt to win followers to a particular belief system. It is not an attempt to make this society a little more bearable. Rather it is an attempt to create a world in which every individual is free to pursue the creation of his life on her own terms in free association with others of her choosing, and thus also to destroy every institution of domination and exploitation, every hierarchy including the invisible one's that grow out of evangelistic and programmatic schemes. With this in mind, we can carry out our struggle by those means that reflect the world we desire and, thus, make our lives fuller, more passionate and more joyful here and now.



WHERE IS THE FESTIVAL?

Regular life, full of precautions and good sense, occupied by work every day, requires a break. But these breaks cannot be reduced to single moments that serve individuals as a time to rest from the weariness of work during summer vacations or on weekends.

The maintenance of order also requires times in which individuals are allowed to break loose, to do what is usually prohibited to them, to vent their tensions collectively, provided that it is in a circumscribed ritual. The audacities that have been permitted in every epoch in festivals – like the Carnival with its costumes and its insolence – bear witness to this social necessity and perpetuate it. Still today, though the impoverished celebrations scarcely separated from the monotony of daily life, one distinguishes in them some minimal vestige of past outbursts.

In Ivrea, Italy, the annual carnival is celebrated with the battle of the oranges that lasts three days and involves the participation of thousands of people. Sometimes, by the end of the first day, there are hundreds of wounded. It is easy to understand how a feast of this sort, transgressing the norms that regulate daily existence with violence, might appear like a different world to those who take part in it, a time of intense emotion and the transformation of one's being.

But the manifestation of this exuberance, of this relative feeling of freedom, is allowed only on the condition that it is limited and circumscribed in time and space. In short, the festival becomes the parody of revolt – like the carnival in Ivrea that was instituted in the medieval era following a revolt, in order to give the people a way to give vent to their powerlessness, but without putting Power in danger.

But at bottom, how many of us do not live on the memory of one festival and in the hope of another?

DREAMING IN THE FACE OF DISASTER:

Thoughts on Utopia

-1-

A world of disaster... this is all that capital offers, all that it has ever really offered, but now it can't even hide this behind the apparent abundance of goods. The world falls apart as it becomes one huge poisonous supermarket. Desperation abounds in its many guises. The loss of values, of principles, a desperation that is willing to take any action, and so mostly acts in ways that reinforce the current order of things. The apocalyptic visions of collapse, the dreams of the hopeless, replace revolutionary desire. If joy can't ever be ours, if wonder and the festival of revolt are beyond our reach, at least we can imagine the collapse of our misery, the fall of the horror, even if it must take us down with it (all but the elect few who will somehow survive in its poisonous ruins). So the "dream" of some is nothing more than the belief that this sad, impoverished vision is the only possibility, because the other possibilities that they imagine, variations on the continuation of our present desolate survival, seem so much worse.

But isn't the worst aspect of our current desolation precisely the impoverishment of imagination, the death of every utopian dream that is not a program, a scheme, i.e., a conception of how to continue the present existence? Certainly, at this point, our hatred of the present reality requires the strength of dreams, of desire, of the utopian ***journey*** *that is the opposite of every utopian program, of the utopian experiment that rejects all schemes. Capital can only provide the final answer, the final solution. But final solutions only bring death. Life is continual*

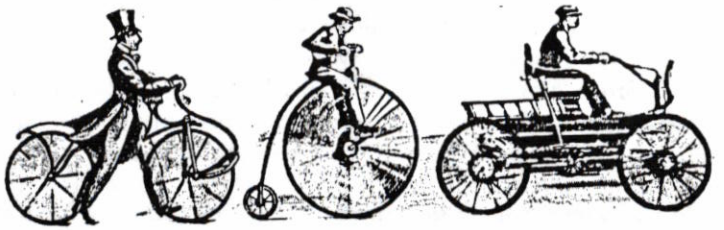
isolated and limited, because most people prefer the security of their misery to the unknown of insurrection and freedom.

An anarchist economic analysis would have to include, along with a serious analysis of the relationship of power and wealth, an analysis of the volitional in the continued reproduction of the economy. It is here that the role of desire, of aspirations, of utopian dreams in the development of an insurrectional practice can become an integral part of our analysis, where the poetry of revolt encounters the theory of revolution.

From WILDCAT SPAIN ENCOUNTERS DEMOCRACY

Once the proletariat had tasted this passion for social war these actions were understood clearly and explicitly by all. The burnings, the stoning of the police,...banks, firemen, etc acquired a lucidity and meaning for themselves. They were by no means gratuitous acts subject to the tactics of fascist [...] but on the contrary were perfectly identifiable with the proletarian expression of social violence against capital.

And those things which were most attacked, even if they remained intact, were precisely those things which sustain and maintain capitalist relations. Thus, when cars were attacked and overturned or even burnt or just plain moved, it was something more than an attack on a lump of steel with four wheels and a motor. It was an attack on commodity fetishism, against a fetish which depends on the spectacle and which transforms it into an instrument of death. When bank and store windows were stoned it wasn't merely a question of smashing glass crystals but also of smashing the meaning these places take on as exhibition centers for the circulation of these products. These expressions of festive destruction came to be the means whereby communication was reestablished in the streets.



WHERE TO NOW?

Some Thoughts on the Uprising in Argentina

During the course of an uprising, there comes a time when decisions far beyond those of tactics, logistics and the meeting of daily needs must be made. A point is reached in the struggle where the choice between pursuing one of the various known paths or choosing to explore the unknown can no longer be ignored. Unfortunately, it seems that in most cases, this decision, which may be the most important decision of any revolutionary struggle, is left to chance, to the random twists of circumstance.

I have been trying as well as one can from the distance of several thousand miles to keep informed about the uprising that exploded in Argentina last December. Though the information has been sparse even in anarchist sources, it is clear that this is no flash in the pan. The distrust in the rulers has moved well beyond the realm of mere outrage into the actual practice of self-organization and direct action on a large scale. The neighborhood assemblies have managed to maintain a healthy contempt for all politicians and labor union leaders, allowing them to remain an organ of insurgent struggle. The signs of struggle in neighboring countries – Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil – could open further possibilities.

But over the past couple of months, the information I have read from Argentina indicates that the struggle there has reached an important crossroads. Assemblies have been carrying out occupations of spaces of various sorts in order to develop activities and projects. When police come to the occupied spaces, demanding to speak to someone in charge, people tell them, "We are all in charge". At the same time workers have occupied factories and have had several meetings to discuss where they want to take this struggle. These meetings have not only included the factory workers, but also people from the neighborhood assemblies and unemployed groups. These occupations of spaces by neighborhood assemblies and of factories by workers mean that more and more of the tools through which the ruling order

operated have been appropriated by the insurgents. The question now becomes: what will people do with these tools?

A true revolution cannot simply be a change in the way current social relationships are managed. Even self-*management of the current system of social relationships remains exploitative and dominating. The whole of society simply comes to replace the individual bosses and rulers as the exploiter and dominator. This is why the question of what to do with these tools is so central. The spaces that have been taken over by the neighborhood assemblies are already seen as places in which the people involved in these assemblies can carry out the projects and activities that they consider desirable. They therefore potentially point to an exploration into new and unknown possibilities for relating and interacting.*

Factories, on the other hand, were developed for the explicit purpose of milking the maximum amount of labor at a minimum cost from the workers – in other words, exploitation is built into them. It is not clear to what extent the Argentine workers involved in the occupations are questioning their role as workers – the role assigned to them by capital. A report about the ceramists of Zanon indicates that the occupying workers there continue to work as they did before, mass-producing ceramics, and this is how they have maintained their livelihood. In other words, they have not yet questioned their role as workers in a practical manner and sought to find new ways to create their lives that are not based on alienated labor. I state this not as a judgment, but to clarify the fundamental choice about which I have been speaking. The Zanon case is of particular interest because the workers there have been demanding "nationalization under workers' control" – a demand that would mean continued involvement in the market economy and commodity production rather than a dismantling of the work machine. Not surprisingly, according to the report, union leaders and human rights organization – con artists from the left wing of the old order – have been involved in this particular struggle.

But the workers of Zanon do not represent all workers, and what they have done up to now could change if the general revolt takes a direction that moves beyond mere self-management of exploitation. From here, I cannot know the extent of experimentation and exploration of new ways of relating that are going on. I do not know whether there are those who are striving to explore ways of creating what they need and desire outside of the context of work as an activity separated from life, those who desire to dismantle the factories in order to open more space and free up more tools for the exploration of other ways of living. Generally during insurrections, imaginations go wild in the most positive ways. But there are also always the spokespeople for

activities and relationships between individuals with dreams, desires, passions and wills – the volitional aspect cannot be ignored without losing one of the most significant aspects of our situation, one of the most important tools for understanding social reality.

Taking the volitional aspect of social relationships into account removes some assumptions that often appear in Marxist analyses. First of all, one can no longer speak of situations that are objectively revolutionary or objectively non-revolutionary situations. Rather one can only speak in terms of situations in which uprisings are more likely to occur and those in which they are less likely to occur, situations in which uprisings are more likely to flower into revolutionary transformation and those in which they are less likely to do so. But in recognizing the reality of the human will, the capacity to defy circumstances, not only individually, but also collectively, is always there. Thus, as well, one of the more disgusting conceptions of vulgar Marxism – the idea that capitalism, industrialism and the consequent immiseration of the vast majority of creatures on this planet are a necessary development in order to realize communism – is exposed for the determinist ideology that it is.

Once we recognize that all social relationships are the activities of individuals in association with each other, it becomes clear that the continuation of the present social order replies on the willingness of individuals to continue to act and relate in ways that reproduce it. Of course, in order to destroy this order, the choice to refuse the current existence must necessarily become collective, ultimately on a global scale. But from what would this collective refusal arise? The economic and productive forces have developed to the point that they are tearing the planet apart. In fact, any further development of these forces seem to guarantee the absolute destruction of the possibility of a free human existence. The old Marxist idea that development of the forces of production would bring about the objective necessity for communism no longer makes sense (even many Marxists now reject this progressivist perspective), unless one means by this, that the havoc wreaked by the industrial/cybernetic juggernaut will make it necessary to destroy the civilization of capital and the state in order for us avoid the parade of ever more devastating catastrohes and the destruction of life. But in this latter sense, it is not a determined inevitability, but a necessity to break out of the habits of acceptance and obedience that one is speaking about. Thus, it is a question of choice, of volition. As one comrade put it, it is not so much revolutionary consciousness, but revolutionary *will* that the exploited need to develop. The current social order continues not because conditions are not ripe for its destruction (they are, in fact, well past rotting), but because refusal remains

SOME NOTES ON MARXIST ANALYSIS:
For Discussion and Debate Toward the Development of a Deeper Anarchist Social Analysis

Often it seems that anarchists lack much in the way of economic theory, leading to conceptions of revolutionary change that seem to be largely schemes for a change in the form of social management rather than a total transformation of existence. Even anarcho-communist visions often seem more like economic schemes than poetic explorations of possibilities. What little serious economic theory is developed in anarchist circles seems to take the form of half-digested Marxism in which it is difficult to see any specifically anarchist aspects. I do not claim to have a deep knowledge of Marx. I have read *The Communist Manifesto* and the first volume of *Capital* as well as a few fragments here and there, but I have read a great deal by Marxists. There certainly may be many analytical tools that anarchists can steal from Marxism, but we need to do so critically. This article is intended to open up discussion in this area and deals with one particular problem I have with much Marxist analysis. There are others as well.

Marxist analysis is aimed at a revolutionary understanding of the social relationships of capitalism – as such, it is an attempt to understand the activities and relationships *of people*. Marx developed his theory and methodology to provide the movement toward communism with a materialistic/scientific basis, in opposition to the quasi-mystical basis behind so many earlier communist ideas.

Unfortunately, the mechanistic basis of modern science, particularly in its 19th century manifestation, all too readily eradicates what is living from any situation under analysis in order to make it fit into the equations developed. Thus, in a great deal of Marxist theory, the fact that it is *relationships between people* that are being analyzed seems to be forgotten. Instead, the activities of productive forces, value, surplus labor, etc. end up being analyzed with the reality of human interaction disappearing beneath the economic concepts. But like gravity, evolution, entropy, inertia, etc., these concepts are not material realities, but mental constructs that can be useful tools for developing an understanding of relationships. In other words, they are not entities that can act for themselves.

Since "laws" of physics general refer to relationships between entities that, as far as we can tell, have no volition, these "laws" can be applied – to the extent to which they are useful – without taking individuality into account. But in dealing with social relationships – the

"realism", and the people of Argentina have gone through very hard times. The people of Zanon cannot be blamed if the put their survival before utopian exploration; a hungry belly makes it hard to dream. But this is precisely how the old world creeps back in, undermining the liberatory experiences of insurrection.

Precisely where the uprising in Argentina will go now is hard to guess. Most likely, some adaptation to the present reality will occur. This does not in any way reflect upon a lack of revolutionary imagination or tenacity on the part of the insurgent people in Argentina. The lack of tolerance for politics or leadership in the neighborhood assemblies and their occupation of spaces for their own purposes indicate that there is some confused vision of a truly total transformation. But the reality of a global civilization based on domination and exploitation of people and the earth still very much exists, and it will not be willing to lose any of the resources in Argentina, including those that are human. This is why those of us who would desire to see the Argentine insurgents take that step into the unknown where work no longer exists as a sphere separated from life, where all the prisons through which this society imposes social control – including the factories – have been dismantled, where people create their lives together on the basis of their needs and desires with no pre-determined programs which they must follow, cannot simply sit back in open-mouthed awe of these courageous insurgents. We must examine their struggle critically, not in order to judge them or tell them what to do, but in order to learn from it and use those lessons in developing our own struggle here where we live. Until there are insurgent struggles, destroying the old world and beginning to explore new ways of existing and creating our lives, throughout the world, and particularly in the "West" – the so-called "first world" – specific struggles will always be recuperated or destroyed, with maybe a few insurgents left to struggle on their own. That is why the necessary form of solidarity with the insurgents in Argentina and in the rest of the world is that of attack against the ruling civilization and all of its institutions with the aim of creating an insurrectional struggle here as well.

A BIT OF SILENCE...

(from *Il Viaggio*, number 3, January 2002, slightly revised)

A bit of silence, we implore you. Let's allow our steps as eternal travelers that have landed by choice or through necessity on the streets of the city to speak.

Let's listen to them: they are steps of galley slaves. So much is lacking if we want them to become the steps of people who are freeing themselves, and what is lacking above all is the capacity to truly speak with each other, to dialogue. No, we are not referring to the empty and impotent chattering in which we all too often lose ourselves. It has nothing to do, then with the continuous bawl of the television. Dialogue is a concrete thing: it is staking oneself once and for all, it is speaking about the life that we live because we are disposed to change it. We have as much need of this as of the air that we breathe.

But democracy takes it away from us, this capacity to dialogue, rendering us noisily deaf and dumb.

From one side it affirms freedom of speech, from the other it maintains and deepens social division, that is to say, exploitation and authority. In unfortunate words: the governments and masters are deciding everyone's future; the exploited are free to say as much as they want, as long as, in reality, they can decide nothing. And when speech is separated from its concrete power to change the world, the words themselves are emptied, they lose force and meaning. Deluding ourselves that we are participating in decisions from which we are actually excluded, we lose the capacity to formulate discussions that are not empty and powerless. It is as if we kept a leg immobilized for years and years until it atrophied; afterwards, someone could tell us, "now, walk!" We would no longer walk, we would have lost the capacity and the whole idea of walking. How much space still exists within us for imagining words that change life, then? What is left of our capacity to say and understand them? We don't know with certainty.

The only certainty possible is that if dialogue must be concrete to exist, the *place* where it is practiced and the *way* in which it is practiced must be equally concrete.

If dialogue is staking oneself, then we can stake ourselves only with those who, like us, have very little to lose from a change, those who live the same social condition, exploitation. Any other *place* of dialogue is illusory. Claiming to

certainly this is the appropriate form for love to take in a society dominated by the economy.

Yet the economic usefulness of the family also exposes its poverty. In pre-industrial societies (and to some extent in industrial societies previous to the rise of consumerism), the economic reality of the family resided largely in the usefulness of each family member in carrying out essential tasks for the survival of the family. Thus, the unity of the family served a purpose relating to basic needs and tended to be extended beyond the nuclear family unit. But in the West, with the rise of consumerism after World War II, the economic role of the family changed. Its purpose was now to reproduce consumers representing various target markets. Thus, the family became the factory for producing housewives, teenagers, school kids, all beings whose capacities to realize their desire has been destroyed so that it can be channeled into commodity consumption. The family remains necessary as the means for reproducing these roles within individual human beings, but since the family itself is no longer the defining limit of impoverished desire – that role now played by the commodity – there is no real basis left for family cohesion. Thus, we see the current horror of the breakdown of the family without its destruction. And few people are able to conceive of a full life involving intimacy and love without it.

If we are to truly take back our lives in their totality, if we are to truly liberate our desires from the chains of fear and of the commodity, we must strive to understand all that has chained as, and we must take action to attack and destroy it all. Thus, in attacking the institutions that enslave us, we cannot forget to attack that most intimate source of our slavery, the family.

take hold, for servility to become a habit. At this point, "cuteness" begins to be discouraged and mocked as childishness.

Since the normal relationship between a parent and their child is one of *ownership* and thus of domination and submission on the most intimate level, the wiles through which children survive this end up becoming the habitual methods they use to interact with the world, a network of defense mechanisms that Wilhelm Reich has referred to as character armoring. This may, indeed, be the most horrifying aspect of the family – it's conditioning *and our attempts to defend ourselves against it* can scar us for life.

In fact, the fears, phobias and defenses instilled in us by the authority of the family tend to enforce the reproduction of the family structure. The ways in which parents reinforce and extend the incapacity of children guarantee that their desires remain beyond their own reach and under the parents' – that is, authority's – control. This is true even of parents who "spoil" their children, since such spoiling generally takes the form of channeling the child's desires toward commodity consumption. Unable to realize their own desires, children quickly learn to expect lack and to kiss ass in the hope of gaining a little of what they want. Thus, the economic ideology of work and commodity consumption is engrained into us by the relationships forced upon us in childhood. When we reach adolescence and our sexual urges become more focused, the lack we have been taught to expect causes us to be easily led into economized conceptions of love and sex. When we get into a relationship, we will tend to see it as one of ownership, often reinforced with some symbolic token. Those who don't economize their sexual urges adequately are stigmatized, particularly if they are girls. We cling to relationships with a desperation that reflects the very real scarcity of love and pleasure in this world. And those who have been taught so well that they are incapable of truly realizing their own desires finally accept that if they cannot own, or even truly *recognize*, their own desires, at least they can define the limits of another's desires, who in turn defines the limits of theirs. It is safe. It is secure. And it is miserable. It is *the couple*, the precursor of the family.

The desperate fear of the scarcity of love, thus, reproduces the conditions that maintain this scarcity. The attempt to explore and experiment with ways of loving that escape the institutionalization of love and desire in the couple, in the family, in marriage perpetually runs up against economized love. This should come as no surprise since

dialogue with the masters, for example, makes no sense, because they have an entire world to lose.

If we want this staking of oneself to be a collective thing and at the same time profoundly individual, the only *way* we have for dialoguing is the direct and horizontal way, without delegation. It is not possible to dialogue, then, with the structures that are organized in a vertical manner in which, due to leaders, sub-leaders and spokespeople, some decide for others. Not even with those parties and unions that talk of being on the side of the exploited, let us be clear.

Only on these simple conditions, that have nothing to do with democracy, is it possible to dialogue. Only on these conditions will we find the words for doing so.

--Insurrection begins with the desire of individuals to break out of constrained and controlled circumstances, the desire to reappropriate the capacity to create one's own life as one sees fit. This requires that they overcome the separation between them and their conditions of existence. Where the few, the privileged, control the conditions of existence, it is not possible for most individuals to truly determine their existence on their terms. **Individuality can only flourish where equality of access to the conditions of existence is the social reality. This equality of access is communism; what individuals do with that access is up to them and those around them.**

THE PRICE OF AN ENTIRE WORLD

by

Massimo Passamani

Every day, this society of hierarchy and money produces violence and, at the same time, a fixed system of moral anesthesia with which to support it. The capacity to perceive it has become an endeavor as well as necessary condition of rebellion. Daily relations are a huge, complex game of disguising the brutality.

The first rule is to fragment the activities of individuals in such a way that it is impossible to perceive them in their unity. What would the worker think if he had the totality of causes and effects of his small repetitive gestures before his eyes all at once? The machines that she operates produce exploitation, poverty, pain, death. But only with an effort can one link the starving children in Africa that one saw on television with the raw materials that one uses and the products that one manufactures. Remaining focused on tiny push-buttons is an anesthetizing of awareness. The little bureaucrat who fills out forms for eight hours a day does not see the immigrant that he will deport when he is at home, because her name on that form is not there. He doesn't see who will end up in prison because she didn't agree with stamped papers. He has never locked the prison door on anyone, not him.

Passive contemplation toward a work activity that one goes through in complete unawareness is the same as that which chains one to the screen. The television viewer comes directly out of the factory or the office. She complains about her job just as he complains about the politician on TV. But if, while the latter spoke, one could see the people crushed by laws, killed by asbestos, bombed, mangled by barbed wire and tortured in any police station, if one could collect the blood, the suffering behind the politician's trashy smile, what would happen?

The only violence that is perceived is that which is reported. The mafia kills for money. The citizen is indignant, and the more indignant she is, the more innocent she feels when she uses

More specifically, marriage became that institution in which the father, recognized as the owner of his family, gave his daughter to another man who then, as her husband, became her new owner. Thus, the family is the seat of the domination of women that spreads from there to all of society.

Within the family, though, there is a further hierarchy. The central purpose of the family is the reproduction of society, and this requires the reproduction of human beings. Thus, the wife is expected to bear children, and the children, though still ultimately owned by the man, are under the direct authority of their mother. This is why many of us who grow up in families in which the so-called "traditional" gender roles were accepted, in fact, experienced our *mothers* as the first authority to dominate us. Dad was a distant figure, working his 60 to 70 hours a week (despite the supposed labor victory of the 40-hour work week) to provide his family with all the things that this society claims are necessary for the good life. Mom scolded us, spanked us, set our limits, strove to define our lives – like the manager at the workplace, who is the daily face of the boss, while the owner remains mostly invisible.

So the real social purpose of the family is the reproduction of human beings. This does not merely mean giving birth to children, but also transforming this human raw material into a being useful to society – a loyal subject, a good citizen, an industrious worker, an avid consumer. So from the moment of birth, it is necessary that mother and father begin to train the child. It is on this level that we can understand the immediate exclamation: "It's a boy!" "It's a girl!" Gender is the one social role that can be assessed from biology at birth, and so it is the first to be imposed through a variety of symbols – colors of nursery walls and blankets, clothing styles, toys offered for play, the kinds of games encouraged, and so on.

But this happens in conjunction with an emphasis on childishness as well. Rather than encouraging independence, self-reliance and the capacity to make their own decisions and act on them, children are encouraged to act naïve, inept, lacking the capacity to reason and act sensibly. This is all considered "cute" and "cuteness" is supposed to be the primary trait of children. Although most children, in fact, use "cuteness" quite cleverly as a way to get around the demands of adults, the social reinforcement of this trait, nonetheless, supports and extends helplessness and dependence long enough for social conditioning to

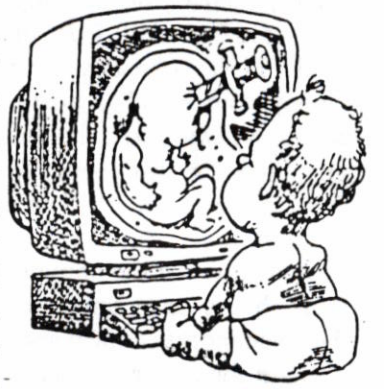
A FAMILY AFFAIR

In the struggle to take back our lives, it is necessary to call every institution into question, even those that reach into the most intimate aspects of our lives. In fact, it is particularly important to challenge these institutions, because their closeness to us, their intimacy, can make them appear not to be institutions at all, but rather the most natural of relationships. And then they can work their insidious ploys and make domination itself appear natural.

Family relationships are taken for granted, even by most anarchists. It is precisely the intimacy of these relationships that makes them appear so natural. And yet the family as we know it – the nuclear family, that ideal unit for commodity consumption – is just a little more than a half a century old, and is already in a state of disintegration. And earlier forms of family relationships seem to reflect the requirements of economic necessity or social cohesion rather than any natural inclination.

The institution of the family goes hand in hand with the institution of marriage. If in non-state societies marriage has tended to be a very loose bond which was aimed primarily at maintaining certain sorts of kinship relationships, with the rise of the state and of property, it became a much tighter relationship, in fact a relationship of ownership.

money (the great mafia). The terrorist puts bombs on trains. The citizen is indignant, and the more indignant he is the more he feels at home when he goes to vote (for the great terrorists). So many people, who earn money every day, take it to the bank and make their purchase at the supermarket, have never held a weapon, or made a threat, or wounded, or killed. They work in insurance, at the post office, at the custom-house or wherever; they are peaceful and love neither blood nor bullying. Clever people. They have never wanted to see violence, therefore they have never seen it.



The economy, in its abstractness, appears to move by itself. This is why money seems harmless. One doesn't see the violence among banknotes, thus it is not there. But one tries to reach out and grasp a product without giving its corresponding exchange value, its socially established value, its general equivalent, in short, money, in return. Suddenly, here is society recovering its calm from its pieces in the face of violated property. The capitalist, the judge, the police, the jailer, the journalist, the priest and the psychologist will come to its defense. They will tell you that the value of a thing is not your enjoyment, your activity or your need, but rather a mysterious social measure that grants a product to you only if you also accept its long train of flatterers, only if you accept the capitalist, the judge, etc. They will come to teach you the value of work and the habit of seeing in things the time that must be stolen from you in order to have them – that is the money – and thus of making things sacred, of serving them, of measuring your value in relation to them and not the other way around. They will come to remind you that the respect for property is love for the human person, that if you think otherwise, you have mental or family problems, that maybe you are seeking the affection of your parents in theft, however you may have been helped, raised, educated, connected. They will come to try you, to imprison you. Or if you defend yourself, they

will come to beat you, to shoot you, to kill you. Whenever anyone disrupts the habitual circulation of money, it is here, beneath the simulation, that the true face of the market appears: violence. "Stealing, robbing, how is it possible?" the citizen thinks, focused on her tiny push-button, on his files or on the television screen in front of him. Why illegal activity instead of work? Perhaps because by stretching out one's hand directly for money, one snatches time – life – from the organization of the economy. One takes the possibility for doing as one pleases, for dreaming, for discussing, for loving, for creating one's projects from the dead time of work. Less time for work, more time for destroying it. Money is time. One certainly does not escape exploitation and the commodity system by attacking property (to think this is once again to focus on one's own pointing finger, thus, yet another ethical anesthetic). What one obtains, having the strength for it, is a few additional possibilities. Things, no longer measured with the yardstick of money (that is, of the extorted activity of sacrifice), lend themselves better to experimentation, to the gift, to use, to destruction. Work no longer appears only as the wage (the first of its chains), but as social organization, as an ensemble of relationships. Escaping the wage system – in the narrow sense – provides one with an additional tool (provided that one does not allow oneself to be enslaved by the money, by the *role* of robber, by specialization) in the struggle against the economy. But this struggle is either widespread or it is nothing. Only when looting becomes an extensive practice, when the gift arms itself against exchange value, when relationships are no longer mediated by commodities and individuals give *their own* value to things, only then does the destruction of the market and of money – that is all one with the demolition of the state and of every hierarchy – become a real possibility.

But when the authorities catch a glimpse of all these aspirations behind a robbery, they raise the price. If those who commit the robbery are anarchist individuals, the price goes up to the risk of shooting or being killed, up to the risk of losing the time one wanted to snatch from work in prison, up to all the additional time the magistrates have planned for them with the additional charge of "armed band". The punishment increases. There is a theorem prepared for any comrade who individually

*we need to keep in mind as we seek to build resistance to this war. My grumbling proletarian friend goes on to say: "...*the slogan 'sabotage the war economy' is actually strictly speaking mistaken. The problem is that the majority of us are not directly in a war economy at the moment, most of us are still very much in a 'peace-time' economy and that is what we need to sabotage and socially subvert.*" For the ruling order, peace-time is simply the time to calmly prepare for the wars to come. With the current military technologies and methods, most of us in the west will rarely experience any significant change in our daily routine due to a war such as the one proposed. We will continue to experience capital's "peace", that fine civilized peace that so bores, yet pacifies, us. Therefore, any effective resistance to this war must also be a subversive attack against the peace of the ruling order. So it is not so much in terms of any immediate effect on the current war effort as on the level of the necessity to destroy current social order in order to make wars of this sort impossible that the practice of non-compliance and insubordination becomes significant.*

But "peace is war" not only because the ruling class uses peace-time to prepare for future wars, but more significantly because their "peace" is itself carried on as a war. Who are the peacekeepers in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Afghanistan? They are armed military personnel. *And even on the streets of the cities here in the west, peace is maintained by armed people in uniform, often with military training. The police also constitute an* arm *of the state, and those who live in poor neighborhoods often know what it is like to be occupied and under the threat of death or capture if they make the wrong move. Consider as well the obvious militarization of the police involved in crowd control during demonstrations and protests. Peacekeeping is really nothing other than war-making. Thus, it can be said that the entire world lives in a state of permanent war, the unending violence through which our rulers maintain their power.*

This is why no call for peace makes sense any more. It would simply be a call to maintain the order that sustains war. There can be no negotiation, no coming to terms with this civilized world. It requires war to suppress the desperation of those it has excluded that is breaking through its doors as everything falls apart. All we can oppose to the bombs over Iraq, if we want our opposition to be more than symbolic, a mere appeasing of our consciences, is class attack. We must liberate the smoldering hatred and hurl it against those who have stolen our lives and the lives of all the exploited of the earth. Identifying the common enemy – the owners, the rulers, the technological and productive network, the totality of a civilization based on domination and exploitation – is the primary form of solidarity toward the bombed and the refugees. Attacking this enemy is the only real tool we have for transforming the wars imposed by the social order – in which we end up killing each other in our real enemy's interests – into a fight for liberation from exploitation and domination, from every form of rule.

examination of the situation. A 'zine of "proletarian grumbling" out of London called The Whinger points out a few things we should consider in developing our resistance:

> Even if there was a general strike in the west it would probably be too late to stop an attack. They no longer need the labour of the bulk of us in the "developed" world directly in their war effort. In the west they no longer need mass conscript armies or mass forced militarization of labour in specific industrial war production to directly sustain the war effort. Most of the weapons are now produced beforehand under capitalist "peace-time" in dispersed commercial arms production which is not labour intensive. Much of the "fighting" by US or british or European forces can be done by privileged protected elite professional technicians and officer-bureaucrats, leaving some shooting and mopping up and patrolling on the ground for regular soldiers. This sort of changes the role of regular soldiers from an attacking and war-fighting role to an occupying and heavy policing role.

There are a number of significant points that can be drawn from these observations. While a number of opponents of the war are seeking to play on the possibility of another Vietnam as a way of inspiring wider opposition, this is, in fact, very unlikely. For all practical intents and purposes, the US has been carrying on a war against Iraq since 1991, with no use of ground troops since the end of Operation Desert Storm and only the occasional bombardment, relying instead on the UN-sanctioned embargo to impoverish and kill Iraqis. Unlike the war in Vietnam, this operation has not had any visible effects on the daily lives of the American populace. The current effort to heat up this war is simply intended to get rid of a former ally who has become a liability in order to increase US control in the region. On this level, it has far more in common with the "humanitarian bombing" of Yugoslavia than with the Vietnam war. And we can assume that this war will be fought in a similar fashion: intensive aerial bombing with high tech weapons causing a fair amount of "collateral damage" consisting of Iraqi civilian dead and wounded, but few if any American casualties, followed by an occupation by an armed, military "peace-keeping" force. In fact, the Bush administration has been talking of setting up an interim American-run military government ruled by a US military officer, similar to that which was set up in Japan following World War II. The point is that this specific war is likely to be very short. It is the military role of "peace-keeping" that will continue.

In fact this war (like every war) is the product of capital's peace-time policies on every level. Contrary to Orwell's thinking, "war is peace" is not a totalitarian "big lie". It is, in fact, an accurate description of the current functioning of the ruling order, though it may be more precise to say, "Peace is war". This is what

decides to solve his money problem by committing a robbery, that would lock him up, even before he is put in jail, in a secret structure with leaders, treasurers and bookkeepers. Thus, the state presents and increasingly spiced-up account and tries to create an odious collective responsibility in order to turn us into the controllers of each other. Once again, illegal violence is reported to cover up the daily, legal violence. Where an anarchist is involved, the train of the flatterers of money is even longer. The wares are even more costly, because what is in question is the very existence of capitalists, judges, police, jailers, journalists, priests, psychologists, bureaucrats, workers and robbers.

The surplus of repression is defending a whole world of prices. No price should seem too high.

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Chronicles of Revolt

HASTINGS, MN (August 29, 2002)—Three anarchists, aged 17, set fire to a Dakota County Sheriff's Department car, destroying it. Unfortunately, the young men were arrested a few days later and face felony charges.

EL PASO, TEXAS (September 13, 2002)—About a dozen railroad bandits ambushed two FBI agents during a sting, kicking them and beating them with rocks. The agents were hospitalized in critical condition with head injuries and were in induced comas.

ATHENS, GREECE (September 13, 2002)—A group of anarchists attacked camera crews and reporters outside the offices of a lawyer representing alleged members of the November 17 terrorist organization, More than a dozen anarchists took part in the attack. The attackers smashed television cameras, stole equipment and damaged broadcast vans. No quarter for the representatives of the spectacle.

WROCLAW, POLAND (September 16, 2002)—A dozen anarchists and squatters blocked the path of police and bailiffs seeking to evict Ms. Barbara Markiewicz, a pensioner who could not afford to pay rent. The police tried to claim that the eviction came as a result of the complaints of neighbors, but the neighbors were united against the police. The bailiffs decided not to go through with the eviction.

HENRICO, VA (October 5-6, 2002)—Vandals severely damaged two SUVs, causing almost $15,000 in damages. They left a note signed "ELF".

SAN JOSE, CA (October 14, 2002)—Unknown individuals attacked a military recruiting center on McKee Road, breaking into the office, leaving graffiti on the wall saying, "pre-emptive attack" and burning two military vehicles associated with the office. One of the vehicles was destroyed by the attack.

WASHINGTON, DC (October 14, 2002)—Unknown individuals attacked the Columbus statue at Union Station with blood red paint to protest the continual glorification of this mass murderer.

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA (October 15, 2002)—Unknown individuals set fire to seven cars at the Western District South police station. Among the cars were a squad car and an unmarked police car. Five of the cars were destroyed. Windows were blown out and the vehicles were left sitting on their rims.

EAST AURORA, NY (October 31, 2002)—About two hundred teenagers gathered along a block in this town, apparently in response to a flyer handed out at the high school calling for revolt against the police. They hurled eggs, bottles, rocks and obscenities at the cops. Seventeen people were arrested.

MADISON, WI (November 2-3, 2002)—During a Halloween party attended by about 65,000 people, a riot broke out. People threw bottles, ripped out street signs, tipped over trash barrels and newspaper vending machines and lit fires. They smashed in the windows at nine businesses and looted two. Sixteen people were arrested.

WHEN PEACE IS WAR

We are all aware that the United States is gearing up for an attack on Iraq. The formalities are still being worked out, but at this point, US military action seems almost certain. But this war will not be without resistance. There have already been numerous protests against the war, and the attack on the recruiting station in San Jose (see "Chronicles of Revolt" in this issue) certainly seems to be a response to the call for war as well. When the actual fighting begins, more resistance can be expected. But resistance to this war cannot simply rely on methods and concepts from the past. An "anti-war" movement that is not also an attempt to completely overturn the ruling order no longer makes any sense. Therefore it is necessary for anarchists to make a serious analysis of the situation that is arising.

Anarchists have already put out a number of calls for non-compliance and insubordination toward the war effort, and these are certainly worthy endeavors. But to understand what this would mean requires careful